

Governance *update*

for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Sandhurst



School Governance
Working Party
Diocese of Sandhurst

BULLETIN TWO

THURSDAY 23 APRIL 2020

Listening Assemblies Round 1:

The first round of Listening Assemblies took place with Parish Priests and Principals via video conference on Tuesday and Wednesday 17 and 18 March as scheduled. While this was a very different way of working for many of us the sessions were very well attended and proved to be most successful and engaging. Unfortunately, it was not possible to proceed with the Listening Assembly for members of the schools' Advisory Boards scheduled for the evening of 18 March; however a video has been prepared for circulation amongst Advisory Boards and the Working Party will be keen to receive feedback in the coming weeks.

Consistently across the Diocese Parish Priests and Principals provided feedback with regard to the role of the Parish Priest under a new governance model and expressed a determination that the pastoral and spiritual leadership role of the Priest must continue, along with close connections between schools and parishes. This will ensure that a strong and seamless Catholic Identity is preserved along with a meaningful liturgical and sacramental life for each school community. The significant role the Parish Priest plays in the appointment of Principals and their participation on school advisory boards is also a valuable element to be retained, as is ensuring an ongoing focus on the history, tradition and foundational narrative of each of the schools.

A significant number of Priests expressed appreciation for an incorporated body that would alleviate the often-onerous burden of government compliance, something for which they had not been trained, enabling them to focus more fully on their spiritual and pastoral presence in schools and retaining their roles as advisor and supporter of their principals and staff. Amongst the Principals, a significant number welcomed the role that an incorporated body could play in supporting compliance processes, enabling them to balance both administrative and instructional leadership.

Ongoing work towards incorporation

Ongoing matters for the Working Party are to ensure that the recommended governance model that is to be presented to Bishop Shane honours the feedback from Parish Priests and Principals, fulfils civil and canonical requirements of good governance, provides an appropriate balance between the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, and continues to build upon the excellent work of education that is currently evident across the Diocese. A Governance Framework is being developed focusing upon Students at the centre of the Catholic Education enterprise in the Diocese of Sandhurst, clearly articulating the role of each level of governance, leadership and management, consultation and support, and outlining responsibilities to local, diocesan and state authorities.

The results of this work will be presented to stakeholders in the second round of Listening Assemblies on **Tuesday May 26 for Parish Priests** and **Wednesday 27 May for Principals and Advisory School Boards**. Further information regarding these assemblies will be circulated in the coming weeks.

As the consultation process unfolds any comments or questions you wish to direct to the Working Party can be made by utilising the dedicated School Governance Working Party email address: sgwp@ceosand.catholic.edu.au

Dr Dan White: Chair | School Governance Working Party | Diocese of Sandhurst